

The Signs of the Times, vol. 57

ESR

William Warren Prescott

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1930

January 7, 1930

What is the “Textus Receptus”?

WWP

W. W. Prescott

Fourth in the series on the history of the Bible

[Signs of the Times, January 7, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 4, p. 11]

Inasmuch as reference has been made to the *textus receptus* by the writers quoted in my last article, it may be advisable to introduce here such information as will throw light upon the origin of this term and its application in the story of the Bible. This can, I think, be done most satisfactorily by using the statements of those who have given careful study to the subject of original manuscripts. The reliability of the following quotation will be readily conceded by those who are acquainted with the scholarly attainments of the writer of the book from which it is taken: *SITI January 7, 1930, page 11.1*

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

“The Authorized Version, like the other Protestant versions, is made from the ‘received text,’ so called, which dates from the first printed edition of the Greek Testament by Erasmus (1516), especially his fourth edition (1527, which contains some emendations in the Apocalypse, derived from the Complutensian Polyglot), was several times reëdited, with a few improvements, by Stephens, of Paris, and then by Beza, of Geneva, and boldly proclaimed the ‘*textus ab omnibus receptus*’ [the text received by all] by the enterprising publishers, Elzevir, of Leyden (in their second edition, 1633), and which ruled, almost undisputed, as a part of Protestant orthodoxy (as the Latin Vulgate as a part of Roman orthodoxy), until, after

Bentley and Bengel had shaken confidence in it, it was set aside by Lachmann (1831) and his followers, to make room for an older and better text since brought to light. The 'received text' was hastily derived, in the infant period of the printed Bible, from a few and faulty cursive MSS., when the best uncial MSS. and the oldest versions (except a corrupt text of the Vulgate) were not yet known, before the patristic quotations were examined, and before even the first principles of textual criticism were understood. Since that time an immense material for textual criticism has been gathered, compared, weighed, and sifted by the indefatigable labors of Mill, Bengel, Wetstein, Griesbach, Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, and others. We have now as complete an apparatus as is necessary to settle the text in all its essential features, and there is no prospect that any new discoveries (even as important as that of the Codex Sinaiticus in 1859) will materially alter the result, unless some future Tischendorf should be so fortunate as to find the apostolic autographs; but this, in view of the perishable nature of papyrus, on which they were written, is next to impossible. Over 1,500 MSS. of the Greek Testament have been more or less compared, and from 100,000 to 120,000 various readings have been accumulated from all textual sources to the present day. Fortunately, these variations do not unsettle a single article of Christian faith and duty; they only establish the essential integrity of the apostolic text, and increase the facilities of determining, approximately, the original reading, without resorting (as is the case with classical authors) to precarious subjective conjectures. On the most important variations which affect the sense, and which alone deserve consideration in a popular version, the leading critics of the day are now quite or nearly agreed. From the uncial MSS. (especially the two oldest, the Sinaitic and the Vatican, or Aleph and B, both made accessible now to all by the quasi facsimile editions of Tischendorf and Vercellone), the earliest versions (especially the Itala, Vulgate, and Peshito [an early Syriac version], and the quotations of the Nicene and ante-Nicene fathers (Origen, Tertullian, Irenæus, etc.)), we are now able to reconstruct, with a tolerable degree of certainty, the oldest attainable text, which is, upon the whole, much simpler and stronger than the post-Nicene and medieval *textus receptus*, and free from liturgical and other glosses."—"The Revision of the English Version of the Holy Scriptures," Philip Schaff, D. D., pp. xxiv-xxvi *SITI* January 7, 1930,

MAINLY THE WORK OF ERASMUS

From another source I take the following quotation, which contains some further information concerning the *textus receptus*: *SITI* January 7, 1930, page 11.3

"In the fourth edition [of Erasmus' Greek New Testament] (1527) the text was altered and improved in many places, particularly in Revelation, from the Complutensian Polyglot. That of the fifth (1535) and last (Erasmus died in 1536) hardly differs from the fourth. The next editions which call for notice are those of the great printer and scholar Robert Stephens (Estienne, Stephanus ...), three published at Paris (1546, 1549, and 1550; the first two, in small 12mo, are known as the *O mirificam* editions, from the opening words of the preface, which is the same in both; the last, a magnificent folio, is called the *editio regia*), and one at Geneva (16mo, 1551), in which the present division into verses was first introduced into the Greek text.... The edition of 1550, notwithstanding its various readings in the margin from fifteen manuscripts and the Complutensian Polyglot, is mainly founded on the fourth or fifth edition of Erasmus.... Stephen's edition of 1551 is commonly spoken of in England as the *textus receptus*; but on the Continent the first Elzevir edition, printed at Leyden in 1624, has generally received that designation. The expression is borrowed from the preface to the second Elzevir edition (1633), in which occur the words, *Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum* [therefore you have the text now received by all]. The text of the seven Elzevir editions (1624, 1633, 1641, Leyden; 1656, 1662, 1670, 1678, Amsterdam), among which there are a few slight differences, is made up almost wholly from Beza's smaller editions of 1565 and 1580; its editor is unknown. The *textus receptus*, slavishly followed, with slight diversities, in hundreds of editions, and substantially represented in all the principal modern Protestant translations prior to the nineteenth century, thus resolves itself essentially into that of the last edition of Erasmus, framed from a few modern and inferior manuscripts and the Complutensian Polyglot, in the infancy of Biblical criticism. In more than twenty places its reading is supported by the authority of no known Greek

manuscript.”-“*The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*,” vol. 2, p. 107.*SITI January 7, 1930, page 11.4*

NO SCHOLARSHIP BEHIND IT

From the facts which I have now presented it appears that the expression “*textus receptus*” was derived from a printer’s advertisement, and not from the decision of any council or of any group of scholars. It is remarkable that a text based upon such late authority should have held sway as long as it did. The only explanation for this is found in the fact that there were so few scholars during that period who were prepared successfully to dispute the boastful announcement of an enterprising printer.*SITI January 7, 1930, page 11.5*

It is interesting and reassuring to note that every Bible scholar who deals with the various editions of the Scriptures, unhesitatingly maintains that no changes have been made in the various texts which materially affect any Christian doctrine. We may thus be confident that whether we use the Authorized Version, or the English Revised, or the American Revised, we need feel no fear that we shall be misled in our honest effort to find the way of life. He who is Himself the Way is plainly revealed to us in each one of these translations.*SITI January 7, 1930, page 11.6*

January 14, 1930

Putting the Bible into the Common Tongue

WWP

W. W. Prescott

The fascinating story of the work of Tyndale, Wycliffe, and other men that God used to transmit His word to us.

[Signs of the Times, January 14, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 5, pp. 8, 9, 15]

I shall now attempt to present, in rather a brief outline, a history of the Bible from the second century to the invention of printing in 1454. I shall not burden my readers with a history and a detailed review of each translation and revision, as this would call for a book rather than an article, but I shall confine myself to such documents as have had some noticeable influence in preserving and in making known to the people in a better form the message of salvation.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.1*

While the language of the early Christian church, both in the East and in the West, was the Greek of that period (the first really Latin bishop of Rome was Victor, a. d. 192-202), yet the official language of the Roman Empire was Latin, and as the influence of Rome grew and spread, the Greek language was gradually superseded by the Latin. The natural result of this change was a demand for the Scriptures in the Latin tongue. As no authoritative translation was provided, it was left to individuals and groups to meet this demand. As a consequence, there appeared many manuscripts of portions of the Scriptures, and "it is now generally conceded that at the latest a Latin translation of the entire Bible was in circulation at Carthage 250 a. d."*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.2*

The New Testament portion was translated directly from the Greek, but the Old Testament text for this work was the Septuagint, so that this part of the Latin Bible was a translation of a translation.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.3*

One of the many versions of that period which is worthy of special mention is distinguished as the Itala, which may be assigned to the latter half of the second century. A comparatively small number of the codices of this version, about forty, are now extant, and they vary from one another in a marked manner, so that it is difficult to classify them in groups, or to conclude that they all came from a common source.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.4*

JEROME AND THE VULGATE

This confusion of readings gradually led to a real demand for a more authoritative text, and this demand was officially met by Pope Damasus (366-384), who requested Jerome, perhaps the most scholarly and most devoted man of that period, to undertake a revision of the current texts. This work was entered upon with some reluctance by Jerome, but was prosecuted with zeal and impartiality.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.5*

In accordance with the pope's instructions, Jerome did not attempt at first to make a new translation, but simply to edit the translations then available, but after he had issued a text of the New Testament on this basis, he became dissatisfied with the plan, and decided to make a new translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. The text of Jerome thus formed met with decided opposition in some quarters, as I have already pointed out in a former article, but it gradually replaced the less reliable manuscripts, and so acquired the title "*Versio vulgata*" (that is, the common version), afterward shortened into the Vulgate.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.6*

"The revision of the Old Testament part was made by Jerome in Bethlehem between the years 392-404 A. D., by direct reference to the Hebrew, of which language he had made himself master somewhat late in life. The work of revision is very unequally done; some books underwent very little change, others were much more carefully treated. In particular, the Psalter, which Jerome translated afresh from the Hebrew, had already been twice revised by him on the basis of the Septuagint; these revisions are known as the Roman and Gallican Psalters. The new Hebrew translation found very slow reception." The following quotation will give a brief history

of the later fortunes of this version by Jerome:*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.7*

“The after history of the Vulgate is interesting, and is parallel to the history of the reception of the new English versions in modern times. No doubt it was adopted in the Church of Rome from the first, but it was not to be expected that Damasus’ successors would be so interested in it as to maintain it in a special position. As a matter of fact, we know that even in Pope Gregory’s time (the second half of the sixth century) the Jerome version and the Old-Latin were employed in the Church of Rome indiscriminately. After about 398 Augustine employed the Gospel part in the church of Hippo Regius, of which he was the bishop, and in all his works after that date long quotations are cited from the Vulgate. About 409 Pelagius in Rome used the Vulgate text as the basis of his commentary on these epistles. But Old-Latin texts continued to be employed almost everywhere. For example, Augustine continued to use the Old-Latin for the rest of the New Testament outside the Gospels.... When we have critical texts of all the post-Vulgate Christian writers, it will be possible to write a very interesting book on the fortunes of Old-Latin and Vulgate texts in the early Middle Ages. In fact, the supremacy of the Vulgate was not assured till the ninth century, and it was not till the Council of Trent (1546) that the Vulgate became the standard for the Roman Catholic Church as a whole.”-“*The Text and Canon of the New Testament*,” A. Souter, pages 50, 51.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.8*

Beginning about the time of Jerome and covering a period of about two centuries, quite a number of versions of a whole or a part of the Scriptures appeared, but as none of them are of present interest it will be sufficient to catalogue them. They are known as the Ethiopic version, the Armenian version, the Georgian version, the Sahidic version, and the Bohairic version. Later came the Gospel of John by the venerable Bede, the first Anglo-Saxon translation of the Psalms, an interlinear Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of the Gospels, an Anglo-Saxon version of the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, etc., and the Psalter in English prose. This brings us to the time of Wycliffe, who was born in 1320.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.9*

LAY BIBLE READING DISCOURAGED

Before considering the work of this forerunner of the great Reformation, it seems to me that it would be desirable to present the facts concerning the attitude of the laity and of the church authorities toward the general use of the Scriptures in the vernacular by the people. Even a brief story of the Bible would hardly be complete if this phase of it should be ignored. Speaking generally, I think I am warranted in saying that the average member of every Christian denomination has, at least theoretically, been in favor of the systematic reading of the Scriptures in the common language of the people, with or without note and comment, and that this has been the attitude of the church authorities with one exception. It is true that some of the early Christian teachers, Athanasius and Chrysostom, for example, took exception to the idea that "the reading of the Bible was a thing for the clergy and monks," but after the great apostasy was more fully developed this position was abandoned. What seems to be an unbiased review of the historical facts is presented in the following extract: *SITI January 14, 1930, page 8.10*

"Later on this giving up of the Bible on the part of the laity led to its being withdrawn altogether, exactly as in the case of the Communion cup. There came a time when laymen could not read, and when they had again learned the art they were not allowed to read the Bible. This was part of the medieval system of keeping the laity in dependence upon ecclesiastical authority, and was based upon the idea of the unfathomableness of the mysteries which the Scripture contained. The traditional exegesis of the church was the only means of reaching these, and the laity, left to themselves, always wandered from the track. As a matter of fact, where Bible study was fostered in lay circles, there was to be found, as a rule, an anti-hierarchical, anti-clerical, sectarian tendency. It was believed that, in the Bible-reading conventicles of South France and Lorraine, Albigensian and Catharist tendencies were to be observed. Thus Innocent III wrote to the Bishop of Metz that conventicles of the laity for the purpose of reading the Bible were to be suppressed. The study of the Bible was to be encouraged, but theological training was necessary.... Of course this did not amount to a general prohibition of the reading of Scripture by the laity, but it bore a resemblance to it, and without doubt the tendency gained ground. Against the Bible in the popular tongue especially, a

continual, though sometimes veiled, and certainly unsuccessful war was waged. Where the church had no Patience with these conventicles, people were driven into the arms of the sectaries, because it was these-especially Albigensians, Waldensians, Wycliffites and Hussites-who gave the laity for free access to the Bible and a free field for its exegesis which developed in increasingly acute form upon antipapal, anti-ecclesiastical fines. This made the church all the more anxious to keep its members apart from the movement. Soon it came to be that the reading of the Bible brought people under the suspicion of heresy. The decrees passed by councils of the 13th and 14th centuries against the reading of the Bible by Waldensians, Wycliffites, Beghards, and Beguines were followed by occasional local prohibitions like that of Archbishop Berthold of Mainz (1485). This caused printers of the Bible not perhaps to suspend operations, but to omit their names from their work. In the period prior to the Council of Trent, therefore, we cannot speak of any general prohibition of the Bible. It was a time of unreadiness and confusion, when mystic piety contended with ecclesiasticism for the supremacy. The crisis was brought about even in Catholicism by the Reformation, which successfully established the unconditional right of every layman to the Bible.”-E. von Dobschutz in *“Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics,”* edited by James Hastings, vol. 2, pp. 607, 608.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.1*

JOHN WYCLIFFE PROTESTED

The fourteenth century was a period of transition when there was a growing feeling against the old order of the domination of the church by the ecclesiastical authorities, but the leader had not yet appeared to organize the new order in the interest of the emancipation of religion. It was during this century that the lavish expenditure of the large income of the church had so impoverished the papal treasury that the pope deemed it necessary to make a demand for funds from the Britons. Among those who joined with Parliament in resisting this demand was John Wycliffe, who made most determined assaults upon the wealth of the high officials of the church and of the corporations through on which they operated. “The power of his attacks lay not so much in his enthusiasm as in the purity, spirituality, and unselfishness of his character, in his

determination to crush the wrong and enthrone the right; in his broad view of the questions of the day and the best method of solving them in the interests of the common people as over against the oppressions of church and state.”*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.2*

In the time of Wycliffe there was no Bible for the common people in their own tongue. The Latin Bible was in the hands of the clergy and high officials, but the laity could not read it, and the clergy did not expound it to them. The need of a vernacular translation for sustaining the religious life of the people seemed to be impressed upon the mind of “the Morning Star of the Reformation,” who came to the conclusion that this was the best, if not the only method by which the power of Rome over the people could be broken. He therefore decided to translate the Latin text of the Scriptures into the vernacular English, although he was then past middle life. Of course this could not be a critical version, as the New Testament was a translation of a translation while the Old Testament was a translation of a translation that was itself a translation of a translation, the Septuagint; nevertheless the work of Wycliffe was a long step in advance toward putting the Bible in the hands of the people in a language which they could understand. The New Testament was completed about 1380, and the whole Bible in 1382, only a short time before the death of the translator.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.3*

Wycliffe adhered so closely to the literal meaning of the words of the Vulgate that his rendering is rather stiff and sometimes not altogether clear. An illustration of this is found in his translation of *Matthew 8:29*: “What to us and to Thee, Jesus Thou Son of God?” Instead of adopting the classical English of his time he employed the language of the common people, and this simplicity of style was largely followed in the Authorized Version. As showing how far the translation of Wycliffe has persisted until the present time, and also the changes in spelling between his time and ours, I will reproduce here his version of the Lord’s Prayer:*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.4*

THE LORD’S PRAYER

“Oure fadir that art in heuenes, halwid be thi name: thi kyngdom cumme to; be thi wille don as in heuen and in erthe. Gif us this day oure breed, oure other substance: and forgeue to vs our dettis as we forgeue to oure dettours; and leede vs nat into temptacion, but delyuere vs fro yuele. Amen.”*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.5*

This translation of the Scriptures into the language of the people was followed at once with an organized effort to bring to their attention the message of salvation found therein. This is well stated in the following paragraph:*SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.6*

“As soon as Wycliffe had issued his translation he organized a kind of religious order of poor, though not mendicant, preachers to preach and teach the English Bible to the common people. These were voluntary workers, not church clergy, who coöperated, when possible, with the clergy. If these church authorities opposed them, they carried on their work independently, and with all the vigor of their consecrated leader, Wycliffe. His disciples or followers were called ‘Lollards,’ and increased so rapidly that one of his sharpest opponents said, ‘You cannot travel anywhere in England but of every two men you meet one will be a Lollard.’ This illustrated the immense popularity that soon greeted Wycliffe, and made *(Continued on page 15) (Continued from page 9)* him the chief advocate of personal religion and of loyalty to the Scriptures. This fact, too gave him great influence with the church authorities, and made him the most successful reformer on English soil. The culmination of his translation marked the first serious defeat for the church’s complete control of the people of England, and the beginning of the end of the rivalry between the Norman-French and English languages. Henceforth the former waned and the latter increased in popularity and strength until it became established as the language of England.”-“*The Ancestry of Our English Bible,*” *Ira Maurice Price, page 223. SITI January 14, 1930, page 9.7*

In spite of its intrinsic value and its great popularity, the translation of Wycliffe did not appear in printed form until nearly five hundred years after his death, and about two hundred fifty years after the appearance of the Authorized Version. Two English scholars published the first edition in 1850.*SITI January 14, 1930, page 15.1*

The invention of printing from movable types in 1454 marked the beginning of a new era in the Bible story, and I shall begin to deal with this era in my next article. *SITI January 14, 1930, page 15.2*

January 21, 1930

Tyndale, the Plowboy, and the Pope

WWP

W. W. Prescott

The gripping story of the contribution of William Tyndale to our English Bible.

[Signs of the Times, January 21, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 6, pp. 8-10]

A high place on the roll of the leading translators of the Scriptures has justly been accorded to William Tyndale, who was probably the first one to make a translation of the whole of the New Testament and a part of the Old Testament from the original Greek and Hebrew. His purpose in doing this work is clearly indicated in the following anecdote. A priest having once said to him, "It were better for us to be without God's laws than the pope's," Tyndale replied: "I defy the pope and all his laws;" and he is reported as having added that if God would spare his life, ere many years he would cause a boy that drove the plow to know more of the Scriptures than the pope did. This laudable purpose was fulfilled to a remarkable degree. *SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.1*

TURNED TO THE CONTINENT

By 1522 Tyndale had definitely entered upon his great undertaking, and he then spent year in London, seeking help from Bishop Tunstall. Failing to receive any encouragement from this source, he decided to try his fortunes on the Continent. The impressions that he formed as the result of his stay in London are thus expressed by himself: "In London I abode almost a year, and marked the course of the world, and heard our praters (I would say our preachers), how they boasted themselves and their high authority; and beheld the pomp of our prelates; and I understood, at last, not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all

England.” It must be borne in mind that at that time England was at least officially loyal to the pope of Rome.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.2*

Tyndale began his translation of the New Testament in Hamburg in the spring of 1524, but it is claimed that the greater part of the following year was spent in Wittenberg in the companionship of Luther. This has given rise to the declaration made by some of his critics that his own translation was largely influenced by Luther's; but those who have given this question careful study assert that the charge is unfounded. A critical comparison of the two translations, it is affirmed, testifies to the independence of Tyndale's work. By April, 1525, he was ready to put his copy into the hands of the printer, with an order for an edition of three thousand copies; but, unfortunately, his plans were betrayed to the Roman Catholic authorities, and he was compelled to flee, with the sheets already printed, to the city of Worms, where he first issued an octavo edition of three thousand copies without notes, and later completed the quarto edition that he had been obliged to abandon hastily.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.3*

The report was carried to England that a translation of the New Testament was being made on the Continent, with the purpose of circulating it in England, and so vigorous efforts were put forth to prevent its importation; but the authorities were outwitted by the concealing of the books in cases of merchandise, and both editions previously mentioned were soon in the hands of the people, who eagerly sought for copies of the New Testament in their mother tongue.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.4*

Determined efforts were made by the ecclesiastical authorities to prevent these pernicious books, as they were deemed, from being circulated. Many were publicly burned, both in England and on the Continent, but more were printed, and it is estimated that in the course of three years the number reached eighteen thousand; but so complete was the work of destruction that only two copies, slightly defective, are now known to be in existence. These facts clearly reveal the attitude of the Roman Catholic officials of that day in England toward the circulation of the Holy Word, even without notes.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.5*

Tyndale next entered upon the work of translating the Old Testament from the Hebrew. He first gave attention to the Pentateuch, a translation of which was published in 1530. The next year the translation of the book of Jonah appeared, and later he is said to have rendered into English Joshua to 2 Chronicles, although these books were not printed until after his death. He never completed the translation of the Old Testament. While residing at Antwerp he was betrayed into the hands of officers of the Emperor Charles V, in 1535, who carried him to a dungeon near Brussels. The following year he was brought to trial, condemned as a heretic, and, after being strangled, his body was burned. Thus Tyndale suffered the death of a martyr to the cause that he loved and to which he devoted his untiring efforts, but the fruit of his labors survived. His translation of the Greek New Testament was of such a character "as largely to determine the character, form, and style of the Authorized Version." *SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.6*

A Latin version of the Old Testament appeared in 1534-35, and a French Bible in 1535; and in the same year a complete English Bible was distributed in England without any previous announcement, dedicated to King Henry VIII by his "humble subjecte and dayle oratour, Myles Coverdale." This was the first complete English Bible ever published. "In contrast with the incomplete work of Tyndale, it was not translated from the original Hebrew and Greek texts, but was based on (1) the Zurich Bible of Zwingli and Leo Juda, completed in 1529; (2) Luther's German; (3) the Vulgate; (4) the Latin text of Paginus (1528); and (5) probably on Tyndale's work in the Pentateuch. In the New Testament Coverdale's main sources of help were Tyndale's latest (1534-5) revision, and Luther's German 1522.... It is apparent, then, that Coverdale was essentially an editor, who gathered together the best materials within reach, and so selected and so modified them as to construct a Bible that would meet both the demands of the public and those of the ecclesiastical authorities. His great good sense, as shown in the use of language to secure beauty, harmony, and melody, made him a wise editor."-*Ira Maurice Price. SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.7*

OTHERS TOOK UP THE WORK

The cordial reception that was accorded to the work of Tyndale and Coverdale seemed to stimulate others to enter the same field. A friend of Tyndale's, John Rogers by name, in whose hands Tyndale had placed that portion of the Old Testament that he had translated but had not published, compiled the copy for another edition of the Bible by using all that Tyndale had prepared and supplementing it with Coverdale's compilation as far as was necessary. This edition was printed in 1537. For some reason this book carried on its title page the name of Thomas Matthew, and therefore came to be known as the Matthew Bible. The circulation of both the Coverdale and the Matthew Bible was authorized by royal permission, and thus the people of England were able for the first time to secure, without involving any trouble to themselves or others, and to read freely the Bible in their mother tongue.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 8.8*

So a new day dawned in the history of the Bible.

Under the patronage and encouragement of Cromwell, a revision of his work was undertaken by Coverdale. Instead of compiling the results of the labors of others he now attempted to provide a translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Complutensian Polyglot, employing scholars to do what he was unable to do himself. As a result of this revision there appeared in 1539 what was designated as "The Great Bible," on account of the large size of the page. The title page carried the following statement, interesting both for its matter and its spelling: "The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the content of all the Holy Scripture, both of ye Olde and Newe Testament, truly translated after the veryte of the Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye dylygent studye of dyverse excellent learned men, expert in the forsayde tonges."*SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.1*

I regret being obliged to state that the royal permission to possess and read the Bible granted in 1537 was withdrawn by the same king in 1543, and it was enjoined "that no women but noble women, no artificers, apprentices, journeymen, servingmen, husbandmen nor laborers were to be allowed to read the Old or New Testament in

English,” and a little later both the versions of Tyndale and of Coverdale were proscribed by Parliament. This unfavorable condition continued for a short time only, and on the accession of the next king, Edward VI, these restrictions were immediately removed, and the circulation and reading of the Bible encouraged. “During this short reign of six and one-half years, no less than thirteen editions of the whole Bible and thirty-five of the New Testament were published.” *SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.2*

I am compelled by lack of space to omit the history of the various versions in Latin, French, and Italian that appeared about this time, and to confine my story to the English translation, of which the Genevan next demands attention. Several different scholars united in the production of this version, prominent among them, and perhaps their leader, being William Whittingham, the brother-in-law of John Calvin. The New Testament was published in 1557, and the whole Bible in 1560. *SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.3*

“The popularity of the Genevan version on its appearance was immense, and the demand for it unparalleled in the previous history of English Bible translations. Ninety editions of the whole or a part of this Bible—more than double those of all others—were required during the fifty-four years intervening before the completion of the ‘Authorized Version’ of 1611; and by this time so firm was the hold which it had acquired of the popular feeling, that it long disputed rank and reputation with that version itself. From the beginning, it became preëminently the household edition of the Bible.”—*Bissell. SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.4*

THE “BISHOPS’ BIBLE”

Inasmuch as the Genevan Bible was produced outside of England and was obviously anti-episcopal in its bearings, it seemed desirable to the church authorities that a Bible should be prepared by themselves, which would carry the atmosphere of the Church of England. This work was accordingly undertaken under the superintendence of Archbishop Parker, who secured the services of fifteen scholars, eight or nine of whom were bishops, but himself revised their translation. This edition of the Bible was published in 1568, and was sometimes called “Matthew Parker’s Bible,” but

more generally "The Bishops' Bible." As a section of the Bible was handled by each one of the translators, it is not surprising that there was a lack of uniformity in the translation as a whole. The Old Testament was quite largely a reproduction of "The Great Bible," but the New Testament gave evidence of some real revision. This Bible naturally was used in the public services of the churches, but it was not popular either with scholars or with the common people, and there yet remained the desire for a really satisfactory version of the Scriptures.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.5*

During all these years the Bible of the Roman Catholic Church was the Latin text of Jerome with its later revisions, but the free circulation of the Scriptures translated into English by Protestants, sometimes with notes that were frankly anti-Roman, imposed upon the Roman Catholic authorities the necessity of preparing an English translation made by themselves, with notes inculcating the dogmas of their own church. This work was done on the Continent by Roman Catholics who had emigrated from England, the New Testament being published at Rheims in 1582, and the Old Testament at Douai in 1609-10. This translation was not made from the Hebrew and the Greek, but from the Vulgate, the authorized text of the Roman Church, and was definitely in the interest of the Roman creed, substituting "do penance" for "repent," and freely using ecclesiastical words and phrases.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 9.6*

The chief merit of this translation "consists in the fact that it has added to the English vocabulary from the Latin some words of importance, among others that might better have been omitted. Occasional English phrases also, subsequently domesticated in our ecclesiastical literature, are due to the same source. This is almost the only claim that the version of Romanists, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, possesses to the honor of being mentioned in connection with the history of English translations of the Scriptures. Archbishop Trench speaks of it as a 'Latinized version, whose authors might seem to have put off their loyalty to the English language with their loyalty to the English crown.'" *SITI January 21, 1930, page 10.1*

The story of the Bible has now been followed to the time of the most

important of all the translations thus far made, the Authorized Version, and this will next have consideration.*SITI January 21, 1930, page 10.2*

February 4, 1930

Bible Revision in the 17th Century

WWP

W. W. Prescott

[Signs of the Times, February 4, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 7, pp. 13, 14]

In order that we may understand the historical background of our Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures which appeared in 1611, we should take note of a proposal made to James I, king of England, at the Hampton Court Conference held January 16, 1604. One of the leaders of "the hated Puritan party" publicly made the suggestion that a new version of the Sacred Writings should be made with the royal sanction. The motives which led to the presentation of this proposal and those which actuated the king in acting upon it, were doubtless quite different. The Bishops' Bible, published in 1568, while not directly under royal patronage, was yet favored by the church authorities and used officially in the churches; but it was not as satisfactory to the people as the Genevan Version, published in 1560, and savored too much of ecclesiasticism to be acceptable to the Puritans, who consequently desired a new version devoid of this alleged fault. *SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.1*

THE KING A PRESBYTERIAN

The king was reared a devout Presbyterian, but on his accession to the throne, he repudiated this creed. Although I do not wish to cast any improper reflection upon the character of that sovereign, yet it does appear more than likely "that James, who exulted in what he called 'kingcraft,' was shrewd enough to see that by a new version of the Scriptures, royally sanctioned and patronized, he might the better control the troublesome elements opposed to his supremacy in ecclesiastical matters, and make of it an instrument to perpetuate the same." However that may be, the king zealously embraced the project, with the probable hope that it would in some way redound to the prestige of his reign. "Sent out with a prestige of scholarship

which would silence the reproachful claims of the Puritans and eclipse their favorite Presbyterian version,-the Genevan,-yet charged with conservative influences, and linked indissolubly with the church and the throne, the new version promised to become the chief agent in maintaining the established order.” -Mrs. Conant’s *“History of the English Bible,”* page 426.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.2*

As the outgrowth of the Hampton Court Conference, scholars were chosen representing both the Puritan party and the higher party in the church who were charged with the duty of providing a new version. Among the rules submitted to them for their guidance are the following:*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.3*

“The ordinary Bible read in the churches, commonly called ‘the Bishops’ Bible,’ to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.4*

“The old ecclesiastical words to be kept; *videlicet*, the word ‘church’ not to be translated ‘congregation’, etc.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.5*

“When a word hath divers significations, that to be kept which has been commonly used by most of the ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.6*

“When any place of special obscurity is doubted of, letters to be directed by authority to be sent to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.7*

“These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops’ Bible: *videlicet*, Tyndale’s, Matthew’s, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s (the Great Bible), the Genevan.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.8*

The revisers were divided into six companies that worked independently of each other, with the natural result that there was a lack of uniformity in the whole product. This arrangement, with its attendant result, was possibly the best that could be done, as no one man and no one company of men could accomplish the whole

work during the period allotted to one generation. As it was, two of the leading scholars died before the allotted task was completed.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.9*

It appears that the revisers did not rigidly hold themselves to the rules cited above, as is made clear in the following extract:*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.10*

“Thus King James’ revisers were well furnished with external helps for the interpretation of the Bible, and we have already seen that they were competent to deal independently with questions of Hebrew and Greek scholarship. Like earlier translators they suffered most from the corrupt form in which the Greek text was presented to them. But as a whole their work was done most carefully and honestly. It is possible to point out inconsistencies of rendering and other traces of compromise, but even in the minutest details the translation is that of a church and not of a party. It differs from the Rhemish Version [the Roman Catholic translation made in 1582-1610] in seeking to fix an intelligible sense on the words rendered: it differs from the Genevan Version in leaving the literal rendering uncolored by any expository notes. And yet it is most worthy of notice that these two versions, representing as they do the opposite extremes of opinion, contributed most largely of all to the changes which the revisers introduced. The important use which was made of the Rhemish and Genevan Versions shows that the revisers did not hold themselves to be closely bound by the instructions which were given them. The Rhemish Version was not contained in the list which they were directed to consult; and on the other hand the cases are comparatively rare in which they go back from the text of the Bishops’ Bible to an earlier English rendering. If indeed they had not interpreted liberally the license of judgment which was given them, they could not have accomplished their task. As it is, their work itself is a monument of the catholicity of their design.”-“*A General View of the History of the English Bible*,” Brooke Foss Westcott, D. D., pages 256, 257.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.11*

“For nearly three Centuries”

the King James Version “has been the Bible, not merely of public

use, not merely of one sect or party, not even of a single country, but of the whole nation and of every English-speaking country on the face of the globe. It has been the literature of millions who have read little else, it has been the guide of conduct to men and women of every class in life and of every rank in learning and education.”-F. G. Kenyon.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.12*

Some have affirmed that the translators of the Authorized Version were more or less influenced by a sectarian bias in doing their work; but if this is true, it would appear that such bias was not revealed in the exclusive interest of any one party. This has been plainly stated by Dean Plumptre in these words: “Dogmatic interests were in some cases allowed to bias the translation; and the Calvinism of one party, the prelatric views of another, were both represented at the expense of accuracy.”*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.13*

THE GREEK TEXTS USED

While I do not wish to give undue space to setting forth the findings of textual criticism in relation to the foundation of the Authorized Version, yet in view of the admitted importance which attaches to the employment of a correct text in translating the Scriptures into the vernacular, it seems proper to present the facts bearing upon this matter as they have been discovered and recorded by a reliable authority. I shall therefore submit the following extract which deals in a fairly brief way with the texts used by the revisers appointed under the authority of King James, and also with some estimate of the comparative influence of these texts upon the translation:*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.14*

“It is a question of some interest and importance to ascertain what editions of the Greek text were chiefly used by King James’ translators. They left us no direct information; they paid little or no attention to textual criticism, which was then in its infancy, but we know what resources were then available. As they finished their work (1611) thirteen years before the first Elzevir edition (1624) appeared, they must have used the later editions of Stephens and Beza, which had then superseded the editions of Erasmus. The third edition of Robert Stephens, called *editio regia*, was printed in Paris, and the fourth at Geneva, 1551; the latter, with the exception

of a few passages, is a mere reprint, in inferior style, but it is the first which contains our versicular division.... It is almost certain, at the outset, that the last editions of Beza were the main basis of the A. V., not only because they were latest and best, but also because Beza, the surviving patriarch of the reformers, exerted, by his Latin version and exegetical notes, a marked influence upon our translators; even his explanatory or harmonistic interpolations in Apoc. xi:i; *Matthew 1:2*; *John 19:13*, found a place in the text, or at least in the margin of the A. V. A closer examination confirms this supposition, but there is as yet no agreement as to the precise extent to which the A. V. depends upon Beza, or sides with Stephens, or dissents from both.”-“*The Revision of the English Version of the Holy Scriptures*,” Philip Schaff, D. D., pp. xxvii-xxix.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 13.15*

In summing up the factors that had an influence in determining the translation of the Authorized Version, I ought not to omit a brief statement by F. G. Kenyon, the librarian of the British Museum in charge of manuscripts, who has given serious study to this whole subject:*SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.1*

“As a contribution to the interpretation of Scripture it [the Rheims or Roman Catholic Bible of 1582-1610] is practically valueless; but, on the other hand, its systematic use of words and technical phrases taken directly from the Latin has had a considerable influence on our Authorized Version. Many of the words derived from the Latin which occur in our Bible were incorporated into it from the Rheims New Testament.”-“*Our Bible and the Ancient Versions*” Frederic G. Kenyon, M. A., page 229.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.2*

It may not be but of place for me to state that I have personally made some examination of the Rheims New Testament, a copy of which is in the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C, and I found that in very many places it was practically the same as both our Authorized and our Revised Version. This is only natural in view of the fact that the same manuscripts were available to them as to King James’ translators, although the Rhemish Version is based more directly upon the Vulgate, and so is largely a translation of a translation.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.3*

MANY REVISIONS

An interesting feature of the history of the Authorized Version is the record of the number of times it was itself revised within a comparatively short time after its appearance, and how quickly it was followed by a demand for another revision. The facts are briefly stated in this extract: *SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.4*

“The first edition of the ‘Authorized Version’ appeared in 1611. In 1614 another edition was printed which contained more than 400 variations from the first. But the sharp criticisms that were hurled at the new version, largely by Hugh Broughton, whose irascible disposition had deprived him of a place, as his scholarship deserved, on the translation committee, forced a revision in 1629. The so-called final revision of the Authorized Version was printed in 1638. Within less than fifty years after the appearance of the King James Version, agitation was begun for a new revision of the Bible. 1653 the Long Parliament submitted a bill calling for such revision. The reasons that lay back of the bill were in part errors, mainly printers’, and some in translation, and also the use of the so-called prelatial [ecclesiastical] language of the version. The matter went so far as to be put into the hands of a committee appointed especially to take charge of the scheme. Some preliminary work was begun, but the dissolution of Parliament put an end to the proposed concerted action.”—*“The Ancestry of the English Bible,” Ira Maurice Price, page 280. SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.5*

ITS MEMORIES CONTINUE

Scholars who appreciate the simple and yet stately English of the Authorized Version, refer approvingly to “the poetry, the genius, the glow and inspiration” of the men who provided this version. In this connection the testimony of F. W. Faber, who abandoned the Church of England for the Church of Rome, is of special interest: *SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.6*

“Who will not say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is one of the great strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sounds of church bells which the convert hardly

knows how he can forgo. Its felicities often seem to be almost things rather than mere words. It is a part of the national mind and the anchor of national seriousness.... The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft, gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt has never dimmed and controversy never spoiled.... In the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible.”-Cited in “*Historic Origin of the Bible*,” Edwin Cone Bissell, M. A., pages 87, 88 *SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.7*

But the value of the Authorized Version is by no means limited to the beauty of its English, as great as that is. Another phase of it is well set forth in the following words: *SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.8*

“But great as has been the literary value of the Authorized Version, its religious significance has been greater still. For nearly three centuries it has been the Bible, not merely of public use, not merely of one sect or party, not even of a single country, but of the whole nation and of every English-speaking country on the face of the globe. It has been the literature of millions who have read little else, it has been the guide of conduct to men and women of every class in life and of every rank in learning and education.”-“*Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*,” F. G. Kenyon, page 234. *SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.9*

All this praise of the general character of the Authorized Version was freely conceded by such English scholars as Kenyon, and Westcott, and Hort, and by such American scholars as Schaff, and Day, and Green, all of whom took a prominent part in the last revision, and yet in view of the new and very valuable material available in the last century, of the highly prized results of textual criticism of a conservative character, of the testimony furnished by recent archaeological discoveries in the East, and of the marked advance in critical Hebrew and Greek scholarship, these same

scholars and many associated with them were fully convinced that another critical revision of the Scriptures was fully warranted. This deep conviction led to aggressive action on both sides of the Atlantic, to which I shall next direct attention.*SITI February 4, 1930, page 14.10*

February 11, 1930

Bible Revision in the Nineteenth Century

WWP

W. W. Prescott

[Signs of the Times, February 11, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 8, pp. 13, 14]

The defects of any version of the Scriptures may be due to a poor text (even though the translation may be good), or to a poor translation (even though the text may be good). Every Biblical scholar will freely bear testimony that the text in the hands of King James' translators was, in general, conscientiously rendered into the English of the early part of the seventeenth century, and that they are deserving of the gratitude of all English-speaking people for the painstaking work they did. But it does not follow that the Authorized Version must be regarded as the last word in the translation of the Scriptures. It would have meant a serious loss to Biblical knowledge if all effort to produce a more exact reproduction of the thoughts of the original writers had ceased in the first half of the seventeenth century. We may well be thankful that there have been earnest Christian scholars who have been willing to devote their time and talents to the worthy purpose of bringing us into the closest possible fellowship with the very thoughts of the writers of the manuscripts of the Holy Word. *SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.1*

In order that my readers may have a clear understanding of the steps which led up to the latest revision of the Bible, and of the many changes of rendering which are found in it, I must make a statement of the facts relating to the discovery of manuscripts not available in 1611, and of the progress of textual criticism. While this recital may possibly be regarded as uninteresting to the average reader, yet it is certainly of supreme importance to those who wish to have the unqualified assurance that we are thinking God's thoughts after Him when we read the latest versions of the Bible, the result of the combined efforts of the best English and American

scholars of the nineteenth century.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.2*

ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS GONE

I must here state again that all the original manuscripts of the Biblical writers disappeared long ago, and that there is no hope of recovering any of them. Written upon perishable material and freely circulated from hand to hand, they would soon wear out, even if they were not purposely destroyed, as in the case of the burning of the Alexandrian Library by the Moslems in their zeal to establish the religion of Islam. The purpose of textual criticism is to provide a text which will approach as near as possible to the original autographs, by the collation of as many manuscripts as can be secured, and then testing them as to their reliability by the application of those principles of criticism which have been tried and tested by critical scholars who have had long experience in dealing with manuscripts of different authors in various languages. This is a field of work which was practically unentered when the Authorized Version was translated, and the assured results of which have been wrought out in the last one hundred years.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.3*

The designation of the Greek text from which the Authorized Version was translated, as the Textus Receptus, although it was due to the desire of an enterprising publisher to secure a large sale for his edition of the New Testament, seemed to have a remarkable influence over the minds of the students of that period, and for more than two hundred years no attempt to produce a better text extended any further than to a recension of the then received text.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.4*

In 1831, however, Lachmann broke away from this well-trodden path, and attempted to construct a text based upon the evidence of such manuscripts as he could secure, regardless of the consequences. This was the first step in the development of real textual criticism. But the material then available was comparatively limited, as will plainly appear in dealing with the manuscripts which have come to hand within the last century, and he did not attempt to deal with any text which was earlier than the last half of the fourth century.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.5*

A worthy successor of Lachmann was Tischendorf (1815-1874), who made a notable contribution to textual criticism by the discovery of the Sinaitic manuscript in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai, from which location it derived its name, and who also made some use of the Vatican manuscript, then carefully guarded in the Vatican Library at Rome.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.6*

The other uncial manuscripts which were in the hands of textual critics after Lachmann were the Alexandrian, probably written at Alexandria, generally assigned to the fifth century; the Codex Ephraem, also of the fifth century, usually designated as a palimpsest because it was partially erased on account of the scarcity of vellum and another manuscript written over it, but it was quite largely restored; and the *Codex Bezae*, assigned by Dr. Philip Schaff to the *sixth century*.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.7*

*These five great uncial manuscripts, the Sinaitic being the most complete, together with very many later cursives and various fragments, constitute a wealth of material for textual criticism not available to the translators of the Bible in previous years, and furnish a good basis for a revised translation of the Bible.**SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.8*

The two uncial manuscripts which have been accorded the most critical study are the Vatican and the Sinaitic. The estimate of their value by representative scholars is set forth in the following quotations:*SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.9*

TWO OUTSTANDING MANUSCRIPTS

“Codex Aleph [the Sinaitic manuscript] is the most complete, and also (with the exception, perhaps, of the Vatican MS.) the oldest, or, at all events, one of the two oldest MSS., although it was the last found and used. Tischendorf calls it ‘*omnium codicum uncialum solus integer omniumque antiquissimus*.’ [The only complete codex of all the uncial codices and the most ancient of all.]...It has contributed very much towards the settlement of the text, and stimulated the progress of the revision movement in England, in connection with Tischendorf’s Tauchnitz edition of King James’s Version (1869).” - “*Introduction to the New Testament in the*

Original Greek," Philip Schaff, D. D., pages xx, xxi. SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.10

"While we accord to Cod B [the Vatican Manuscript] at least as much weight as to any single document in existence, we ought never to forget that it is but one out of many, several of them being nearly (and one [the Sinaitic] quite) as old, and in other respects not less worthy of confidence than itself."-"*A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament,*" F.H. A. Scrivener, M. A., D. C. L., LL. D., *Fourth Edition by Rev. Edward Miller, M. A., vol. 1, page 120.* (This statement by a scholar who was, generally speaking, opposed to the Revised Version, may certainly be accepted as unprejudiced.) *SITI February 11, 1930, page 13.11*

"This Vatican manuscript is considered by a great many scholars to be the best of all the New Testament manuscripts. The Sinaitic and the Vatican are, from the standpoint of the history of the texts as thus far known, by far the two best witnesses for the oldest text. Wherever they were written and at whatever date, they represent, it would appear, as both Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort thought, good manuscripts of the second century."-"*The Canon and Text of the New Testament,*" Caspar Rene Gregory, *page 347.* *SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.1*

"The Sinaitic and the Vatican MSS. are by far the most important for antiquity, completeness, and value."-"*Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek,*" Philip Schaff, D.D., *page xviii.* *SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.2*

In the face of such testimony as this from the leading textual scholars I will submit *without comment* the reason given by Dean John W. Burgon for admitting that these manuscripts, although, as he claimed, corrupted far beyond many others, had been preserved in a remarkably good condition. I will use the statement of the case as made by Dr. Salmon: *SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.3*

"Burgon gives an amusing explanation of how it comes to pass that the most ancient MSS. are among the worst. Their antiquity is due to their badness; they were known to be so bad that they were little used, and consequently remained untouched on their shelf, and so have survived when their betters have perished."-"*Some Thoughts*

*on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament,” George Salmon, D. D., page 4.**SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.4*

STRICTLY PROTESTANT

The strictly Protestant character of the Westcott and Hort text, which was not adopted by the revisers but which doubtless had much weight with them, is attested by the last-named author in these words:*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.5*

“With one exception, to be presently mentioned, Hort never follows mere Western authority, so that his may be pronounced to be a thoroughly Protestant New Testament, the fact that a reading is Roman being regarded as enough to condemn it.”-*Id.*, pages 86, 87.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.6*

After this rather lengthy digression I must return to the simple story of the revision of the Authorized Version. This work was undertaken and carried forward under the leadership of the best Biblical scholars of the Church of England, with whom were associated a goodly number of distinguished American scholars. The first proposal was for the revision of the New Testament only, but this was immediately changed to include the Old Testament. Nearly all the evangelical denominations were represented on the Revision Committee, but no Roman Catholics accepted the invitation.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.7*

The work was entered upon in May, 1870, by the adoption of the rules to be followed, among which I may mention: “To introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness; to limit, as far as possible, the expression of such alterations to the language of the Authorized and earlier English Versions; ...that the text to be adopted be that for which the evidence is decidedly preponderating; and that when the text so adopted differs from that from which the Authorized Version was made, the alteration be indicated in the margin; to revise the headings of the chapters and pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation.”*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.8*

The different companies were organized, and the actual study and

translation were commenced by both the Old and the New Testament companies in June, 1870. The American scholars began their coöperation with the English Committee in 1872.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.9*

After eleven years of faithful and conscientious labor the Revised New Testament was published and offered for sale in May, 1881. The demand was unprecedented. "It is estimated that almost three million copies of the Revised New Testament were sold in England and America in all editions within less than one year after its publication." "The *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Times* published the book entire in their issues of May 22, 1881. The Gospels, Acts, and Romans, containing about 118,000 words, were telegraphed from New York, and the remainder of the book was set up from copies received in Chicago on the evening of May 21."*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.10*

It naturally required more time and labor to revise the Old Testament, and this work was not completed until 1884. The entire Revised Version in one volume appeared in May, 1885. It is not surprising that the demand for this book was not as great as for the New Testament alone, but it met with a steady sale.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.11*

The English Committee was disbanded at the close of their labors, but the American Committee decided to continue their sessions, although they had agreed not to publish the results of their further study for a period of fourteen years after the complete English Revision appeared. At the close of this period there was offered to the public, as the result of their continued study, the American Standard Version of the Scriptures, a version which differs in some respects from the English revision, although in the main it agrees with it.*SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.12*

INDIVIDUAL CONVICTION MUST GUIDE

Some one may now ask, Which translation ought I to use, the Authorized, or the English Revised, or the American Revised? I hope I have made it clear that each one can safely follow his own choice without any fear of missing the saving truth of the gospel. On

account of the beauty of its stately language and the tender associations connected with it, many will prefer the Authorized Version. Those who are inclined to avail themselves of the result of the labors of conservative scholars who have sought to incorporate into the two Revised Versions the most exact meaning of the most primitive text may with equal certainty adopt either the English or the American Version. Still others may find it both interesting and helpful to use an edition now available in which the differences in the renderings are clearly shown by printing such differences in parallel lines. I only urge that one of these versions, or some other vernacular version, should be constantly and prayerfully read, with the definite purpose to translate its message into a life of daily devotion to the service of God. He who speaks to the heart through any and all of the hundreds of translations now in circulation throughout the world will reveal His forgiving mercy and His saving grace to every seeking soul irrespective of versions. *SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.13*

A comprehensive review of the story of the Bible would hardly be complete without some reference to the contribution which the spade of the archaeologist has made in confirmation of the historicity and the authenticity of the Scriptures. I do not mean that apart from these modern discoveries we should be in doubt as to the reliability of the revelation made to us, but they provide a convincing answer to the unwarranted charges made by the unbelieving scientist, the atheistic rationalist, and the iconoclastic modernist who live in a materialistic atmosphere. I shall therefore venture into the archæological field in my next article. *SITI February 11, 1930, page 14.14*

February 18, 1930

Kept for this Skeptical Age

WWP

W. W. Prescott

In the dry sands of Bible lands through the long centuries have been preserved thousands of testimonials of the past, preserved only to be dug up now to refute the specious arguments of those who are bent on defaming and destroying the Bible.

[Signs of the Times, February 18, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 9, pp. 8-10]

Skepticism, modernism, materialism, rationalism, atheism-these are the words that define the present tendency in the religious field. The modern mind has discarded any principle of external authority. The early chapters of Genesis are merely folklore and patriarchal legend to the modernist. It is claimed that the historical portions of the Bible, and especially of the New Testament, are full of blunders. The higher critic feels at liberty to reject any part of these writings that his own consciousness does not approve of, and to amend other parts to accord with his judgment of what the writer ought to have written, so that one radical iconoclast will allow only five sayings of Jesus as being authentic. Thus it happens that a goodly number who have not discovered the sure foundation of faith have been disturbed by serious doubts and questionings. *SITI February 18, 1930, page 8.1*

It is worthy, of special note, as indicating God's care for His own, that during the very time when such serious charges have been formulated against the Scriptures, such discoveries in the East have rewarded the search of loyal investigators as have testified in no uncertain tones to the absolute reliability of these ancient writings. "It must be accounted a wonderful providence of God that, at a time when so much is being said and done to discredit the Old Testament, so marvelous a series of discoveries, bearing directly

on matters contained in its pages should have been made.... There is today a mass of material available for the illustration and confirmation of Holy Scripture for which we cannot be sufficiently grateful.”-*James Orr*. “There are those who believe with firm faith that, for these days of skepticism and of merciless and conscienceless historic criticism, the lands have been kept almost in their original condition that the testimony of the modern skeptical traveler may (perhaps unintentionally on his part, but necessarily) corroborate the teachings of the Bible. Have the mummy wrappings of Mohammedan domination held the Far East unchanged through the centuries that, in these days of doubt, the hills of Canaan, the plains of Egypt, and the ruins of Mesopotamia might lift their voices in solemn attestation to the divine truthfulness of the sacred historians?”-*F. H. Vincent*. *SITI February 18, 1930, page 8.2*

THE BIBLE CORROBORATED

The spade of the archaeologist has added a wonderfully instructive chapter to the story of the Bible, to which I must now give some attention. This phase of the story is most interesting. Many of the buried cities of Asia have been uncovered; written records that date from the time of Abraham, and even earlier, have been discovered and deciphered; an almost indefinite number of documents of various kinds, which clearly reflect the life of New Testament times, have been dug out of the sand in different places; inscriptions in a variety of languages, some of them in cuneiform characters, have been brought to light; and the habits and customs of ancient peoples have been so fully delineated as to furnish much additional light for the correct interpretation of the writings of prophets and apostles who employed the terms and the illustrations familiar to those with whom they associated in daily life. “The Bible at its face value is being corroborated wherever archaeology immediately and definitely touches it. To illustrate this statement fully would be to cite every definite piece of archaeological evidence in the Biblical field of scientific research during the last one hundred years.”—*M. G. Kyle*. While this is true of the Scriptures as a whole, it is emphatically true of the New Testament. “It is a most suggestive fact that while these unrivaled discoveries of the monuments and inscriptions of the ancient world have in scores of instances cast discredit upon the accuracy of classical historians and ancient

writers, they have served only to put in clearer light the remarkable knowledge and scrupulous exactness of the New Testament writers.”—*Cobern.SITI February 18, 1930, page 8.3*

I hardly need to state here that it will be quite impossible, within the limited space allotted to this series of articles, to make even a brief reference to each of the many expeditions to the East that have been made under the auspices of different national governments and scientific societies of the world during the last century, or even to summarize the results of their most valuable investigations, so far as they have a bearing upon the making and the transmitting to us of the Bible. They have touched so many phases of Bible history from Genesis to Revelation; they have confirmed so many references, both direct and indirect, to the manners and customs of the various nations of antiquity; and they have testified in so many ways both to the reliability and to the time of writing of so many of the books of the Bible, that I am at a loss to determine just what portion of this great field I should attempt to cover. I can only make an honest effort to present some of the most significant features of this really and seriously thrilling subject.*SITI February 18, 1930, page 8.4*

THE REVELATION OF BIBLE LANDS

The revelation of the work of God in redemption is embedded in the history of various countries and peoples. “There are the ‘Bible lands,’ the arena upon which the God of history, of providence, and of redemption, specially displayed His power and grace. The great primary revelation of His dealings with men is embodied in the Hebrew literature. These Bible lands have yielded to us a secondary revelation. It is subordinate, indeed, to the first, but it is richly supplementary and illustrative. It is the province of Oriental archaeology to deal with the peoples and countries and languages of the Bible so as to bring out their true relations to Bible teaching. They were formerly regarded as the mere framework of the picture. Now we are learning that they make up its groundwork, its coloring, and its perspective. They embrace, in a word, what is material in the revelation apart from what is spiritual and ideal. And these elements the outward and the inward are to us inseparable, as they were in their evolution mutually involved and

interwoven.”-*McCurdy.SITI February 18, 1930, page 8.5*

I presume it is well known to my readers that one of the achievements of the so-called higher criticism is to resolve the patriarchs of the Old Testament into mere tribal personifications, whatever may be meant by that expression. This may be satisfactory enough to the titled scholars who sit in their studies and evolve their theories to discredit the Bible, but they cannot silence the cylinders, the tablets, and the papyri, which bear unequivocal testimony to the historical character of these very men. “A name Abe-ramu, almost the same as Abraham, appears on a contract tablet of the second reign before Hammurabi. Other contract tablets of that age exhibit the names Jacob and Jacob-el.”-*SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.1*

JACOB AND JOSEPH VOUCHED FOR

“The names Jacob-el and Joseph-el appear on a monument of Thothmes III of Egypt (about 1500 b. c.) as place names in Palestine. In other ways the whole period has been lifted up into new and commanding importance. It is generally accepted that the Hammurabi of the inscriptions is no other than the Amraphel of *Genesis 14:1*; and the discovery of the Code of this able ruler has given his name an *éclat* it can never again lose. The discovery was made at Susa in January, 1902, and the Code itself, the most complete and finished of any in antiquity, shows the height of civilization to which the Babylonia of Abraham’s day had attained.”-*James Orr.SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.2*

Among the many documents that throw a helpful light upon the Biblical records are the so-called Tel-el-Amarna letters. These were discovered in 1888 at Tel-el-Amarna in Egypt, about 180 miles south of Cairo, and consist of “letters and dispatches written wholly in the Babylonian script and language.” “When the more than three hundred tablets came into the hands of museum officials in Berlin, London, and Cairo, a glance speedily revealed their character. They were letters from monarchs of western Asia, like Kadashman-Kharbe, king of Babylonia; Ashuruballit, king of Assyria; and Tush-ratta, king of Mitanni, to Amenophis III, or Amenophis IV, kings of Egypt, or they were dispatches from various governors or princes in

Syria or Palestine, Philistia, or Phoenicia to these same Egyptian kings whom they had acknowledged as lawful rulers or suzerains over their territories. The importance of these documents was recognized at once, and the minute study to which they have been subjected has only confirmed the first estimate of their value.... The Tel-el-Amarna letters prove that the invasions which were destined to break the Syrian provinces of Egypt into pieces had already begun. A large number of governors were making constant appeals to the king for aid against enemies who threatened the very existence of the Egyptian dominion in Asia. The two enemies most dreaded were the Khatti, that is the Hittites, and the Khabiri. The former are the same people who find frequent mention in the Egyptian inscriptions of a later period under the name of Kheta.... These Khabiri may indeed have been related to the stock which has come to bear the name 'Hebrew' exclusively for us, but there is no positive proof of this."—*R. W. Rogers. SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.3*

In the earlier days one of the favorite reasons for impugning the historical accuracy of the Scriptures was because it mentioned Belshazzar as one of the rulers of Babylon. The critics loudly asserted that there was no such person, and the mythical character of the whole book of Daniel was consequently assumed. But alas for the critics! "In 1854 Sir H. C. Rawlinson discovered the name of Bel-sarra-uzur-'O Bel, defend the king'-in an inscription belonging to the first year of Nabonidos which had been discovered in the ruins of the temple of the Moon-god at Muqayyar or Ur. Here Nabonidos calls him his 'first-born son.' In the contracts and similar documents there are frequent references to Belshazzar, who is sometimes entitled simply 'the son of the king.'"—*Encyclopedia Britannica*. Thus does archaeology put to shame the critics.*SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.4*

THE TESTIMONY OF STONE

I need merely to mention the Moabite stone, discovered in 1868 in Diban (the Dibon of the Old Testament) in Moab. "This inscription consists of thirty-four lines (the last two being undecipherable), and was written by Mesha king of Moab, to commemorate his successful revolt from the yoke of Israel, recorded in *2 Kings 1:1*

and *chapter 3*.... The writing is in the ancient Hebrew characters.... The inscription is proved to be genuine by the Bible account, the two throwing light on each other.”-*E. W. Bullinger*. The discovery of the cylinders of Nabonidos, the father of Belshazzar, and of the cylinder of Cyrus, which gives his own account of the capture of Babylon, testify to the historicity of the book of Daniel. These and many other more ancient inscriptions now in the hands of archaeologists have finally and absolutely destroyed the unwarranted assumption on the part of some of the higher critics that the art of writing was unknown in the time of Abraham and even in the time of Moses, and that as a consequence the larger part of the Old Testament was of post-exile origin. “First Egyptology, then Assyriology, showed that the art of writing in the ancient East, so far from being of modern growth, was of vast antiquity, and that the two great powers which divided the civilized world between them were each emphatically a nation of scribes and readers. Centuries before Abraham was born Egypt and Babylonia were alike full of schools and libraries, of teachers and pupils, of poets and prose writers, and of the literary works which they had composed.”-*A. H. Sayce*. *SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.5*

THE SPADE SHATTERS EVOLUTION

A favorite field in which the Biblical critics have found abundant opportunity for the development of their modernistic theories is the application of the evolutionary hypothesis to the solution of religious and historical questions connected with the most ancient times. Of course this has led them to deny the historicity of large portions of the Holy Scriptures, and to rearrange the order of ancient events to suit their own ideas of how they ought to have occurred according to the standards of this scientific age. But the matter-of-fact spade has ruthlessly shattered their baseless conclusions. “In fact, the whole application of a supposed law of evolution to the religious and secular history of the ancient Oriental world is founded on what we now know to have been a huge mistake. The Mosaic age, instead of coming at the dawn of ancient Oriental culture, really belongs to the evening of its decay. The Hebrew legislator was surrounded on all sides by the influences of a decadent civilization. Religious systems and ideas had followed one another for centuries; the ideas had been pursued to their logical conclusions,

and the systems had been worked out in a variety of forms. In Egypt and Babylonia alike there was degeneracy rather than progress, retrogression rather than development. The actual condition of the Oriental world in the age of Moses, as it has been revealed to us by archaeology, leaves little room for the particular kind of evolution of which the 'higher criticism' has dreamed."-A. H. Sayce.*SITI February 18, 1930, page 9.6*

A large number of volumes have been written which contain the results of modern discoveries in the ancient East bearing testimony to the exactness and the trustworthiness of the Old Testament alone, but I can bring to the attention of my readers only the few examples which I have cited. I shall next turn to the New Testament field for the significance of modern research in Bible lands.*SITI February 18, 1930, page 10.1*

February 25, 1930

The Spade Confirms the New Testament

WWP

W. W. Prescott

[Signs of the Times, February 25, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 10, pp. 13-15]

A wide field of information bearing upon the trustworthiness and the interpretation of the New Testament documents has been laid open to us by the spade of the archæologist. The discoveries made during the last century have been many in number and remarkable in value. A large number of volumes have been published in which the results of the extended labors of the archæologists have been made available to us. It is manifestly impossible for me, in the limited space at my command, to do more than to make some general observations concerning this comparatively modern contribution to the story of the Bible, and to cite some of the testimony that tends to establish the reliability of the text of the New Testament which conservative scholarship has accepted as authoritative. *SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.1*

THE SETTING RESTORED

In a general way, it may be said that the researches of the archæologists have restored to a large extent the historical setting of the New Testament. The homes of the peoples who dwelt in the Roman Empire in the time of our Lord and His disciples have been uncovered. Their manners and customs have been disclosed. The language of the common People is now well known, and the meaning of a large number of words that had either been obscure or misunderstood, has now Become clear. It has now been demonstrated that the language of the New Testament, which was formerly studied as a literary language to be interpreted according to the usage of the classics of that period and of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, is really in the main the language of the common people. As the inevitable result of this very

significant discovery, the grammars of the New Testament that have been the standard for a long time, are now largely discarded, and entirely new grammars based upon the contemporary writings and usage have been prepared by leading scholars. It should of course be understood that such changes have not in the least degree disturbed the great doctrines of Christianity, but, on the contrary, have set them in a clearer light, and have confirmed the trustworthiness of the texts that have been edited for us by such scholars as Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort. The following extract will be of interest in this connection: *SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.2*

“No man has ever seen a page from any pre-Constantine New Testament previous to these discoveries [of some ancient manuscripts in Egypt]. Many supposed that if ever such Bibles came to light they would be very different from ours. Some skeptics frankly expressed their opinion that the present New Testament was either originated by Constantine or much changed by him. But now these New Testaments are in our hands. We now know the kind of New Testament which the poor Christians of the martyr period were using and reverencing. It was the same as ours. It is now certain that there was nothing of importance left out by Constantine. There was nothing put in.... The results confirm surprisingly the ancient text as worked out by the scholarship of the last century. It must not be forgotten that these very ancient new MSS. just discovered constitute but a very small proportion of the text material which scholars have before them in determining the Bible text. In addition to the versions to be mentioned later it may be said—speaking only of Greek MSS.—that Von Soden in 1902 catalogued 2,328 New Testament manuscripts. Of these about forty contain in whole or in part all the books of the New Testament. Some 1,716 MSS. contain portions of the Gospels, 581 of the Acts, 628 of the Pauline epistles, and 219 of the Apocalypse. The text of no other ancient book is so certain as that of the New Testament.”—*“The New Archæological Discoveries,” Camden M. Cobern, Ninth Edition, pp. 173,174.* *SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.3*

MADE SCRIPTURES MORE CERTAIN

In order that we may be able to deal more understandingly with the sources of the information upon which such assuring conclusions are based, I shall classify them thus: First, there are the inscriptions that were engraved upon stone, metal, etc.; next, are the documents of various kinds written upon leaves made from the papyrus plant; then, there are the writings, consisting usually of only a few sentences, which have been found upon pottery, more frequently upon broken pieces that had been thrown away. A comparatively small portion of this matter consists of actual texts of the New Testament, and yet it has all contributed to a greater certainty concerning the inspired writings and their meaning.*SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.4*

I shall first direct attention to the inscriptions, and their value in relation to textual criticism, by presenting some information furnished by a competent authority:*SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.5*

“The bulk of the inscriptions are on stone, but to these must be added inscriptions engraved in bronze or scratched on tablets of lead or gold, a few wax tablets, the scribblings (*graffiti*), found on walls, and the texts on coins and medals. These inscriptions of which there are hundreds of thousands, are discovered on the site of the ancient civilized settlements of the Græco-Roman world, in its fullest extent from the Rhine to the upper course of the Nile, and from the Euphrates to Britain.... The great collection of Greek inscriptions has long ceased to be up to date, and is gradually being replaced by newer publications, but it was this first great attempt to collect all the material that alone enabled Greek epigraphy to develop so brilliantly as it has done. Great societies as well as independent archæologists have added to the total number of inscriptions known by carrying on systematic excavations, typical examples being the work of the Germans at Olympia and of the French at Delphi. New Testament scholars will follow with interested eyes the discoveries made in recent years by the English and Austrians on the site of ancient Ephesus, by British investigations in Asia Minor in general, by the Germans at Pergamum, Magnesia on the Mæander, Priene, Miletus, and other places in Asia Minor, in Thera, Cos, and other islands, and in Syria and Arabia, by the French at Didyma, and in Delos, by the

Americans in Asia Minor and at Corinth. There are moreover plenty of native Greek archæologists whose excellent work vies with that of their foreign visitors....*SITI February 25, 1930, page 13.6*

“Of the Christian inscriptions and their direct value to the scientific study of early Christianity I have not to speak; but I wish at least to say that in one direction they promise a greater harvest than many people might expect, viz., with respect to the history of the text of Scripture and its use. Already with the materials at present known to us quite a large work could be written on the text of Scripture as illustrated by Biblical quotations in ancient Christian (and Jewish) inscriptions.”-“*Light From the Ancient East*,” Adolph Deissmann, pp. 10-19.*SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.1*

HIGHER CRITICISM EXPOSED

If I were asked, To what cause can you attribute the expenditure of so much money and effort within the memory of the average man in making these extensive explorations and in deciphering these sometimes very imperfect and obscure inscriptions? I could only say that in my opinion there is back of all this, as its inspiring cause, the definite purpose of God to reveal the foolishness of some of the so-called wisdom of this world as displayed by the higher critics, and to leave every one without excuse concerning the reliability of the revelation of the gospel of the grace of God. Surely God has not left Himself without witness, and that witness is now being borne in a very definite way.*SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.2*

It may be advisable to state briefly just what is meant when we speak of the papyri. These are documents written upon sheets made from the papyrus plant. “The papyrus has been used as a writing material from very ancient times.” The method of making this material into sheets has been described as follows: “The pith of the stem of the papyrus plant was cut into thin strips, which were laid vertically side by side in the form of a sheet for writing. Above this was laid a horizontal cross layer of the same strips. The two layers were glued together with a preparation in which the Nile water played a certain part. The sheets thus obtained were pressed, dried in the sun, and polished to remove any inequalities of the surface. Then they were ready for use.”-*Kenyon*.*SITI February 25, 1930,*

4,000 YEARS OF PRESERVATION

The conclusion might be readily drawn that these sheets would quickly perish, and it may be a surprise to some to learn that documents written upon this material more than 2000 years b. c. have been discovered. These writings have been known for a long time, but their value was not recognized until within recent years. Their preservation for such a long period is due to the dry climate of Egypt, where the greater part of them have been found, and to the fact that they were buried in great heaps of dry sand. It would appear that in those early days they were regarded merely as so much waste paper that the people did not know how to utilize, and they were dumped out in some convenient place and later covered with the dry sand blown by the wind. Such were the simple, and some might say fortuitous, methods that divine Providence employed in preserving important testimony concerning the language in which the New Testament was written. As to the value of these papyri in the attempt to understand correctly the language of the New Testament, the following quotation will be of interest and value: *SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.4*

THE VALUE OF THE PAPYRI

“At first the chief value of the papyri seemed to lie in the new light which they threw upon the first century, and in the multitude of ancient classics they had revealed, and in the Christian fragments of the first four centuries preserved.... Deissmann was the first to recognize that these papyri were written exactly in the language of the New Testament, and to draw the conclusive inference that Biblical Greek could not any longer be regarded as an esoteric, sacred language, or as a language to any considerable degree Hebraized by its Jewish authors.... It was Deissmann who caught the revolutionary truth that the Gospels were a ‘people’s book’ written in the dialect of the middle classes in the vernacular of the home and the shop; written in a style which no literary man of that day would have permitted himself to use, but which did appeal to the masses. An examination of the papyri written

contemporaneously with the New Testament proved, according to Deissmann, that the New Testament books, with perhaps the exception of two or three, were written to workingmen in the tongue of the workingman, the Bible authors freely using the colloquialisms and even the solecisms of the market place. This was a theory which at first seemed too good to be true. It meant that Wycliffe only did for England what Matthew and Mark did for the Roman world. Christianity from its beginning spoke the tongue of the peasant. Its crooked grammar and mixed orthography and peculiar syntax, upon which have been built so many theological castles in the air, are all found paralleled exactly in the letters and other familiar documents of that first century. This common Greek (the Koine) was spoken everywhere throughout the entire Roman Empire, and even our early church titles, such as 'bishop,' 'presbyter,' 'deacon,' etc., were well-known official names used in the trade-unions and other corporations, religious and civil, of that era. This contention, which seemed at first utterly unbelievable, has now inside of twenty years gained the adhesion of almost every living Greek scholar and has caused the rewriting of the New Testament lexicon and grammar."—*"The New Archæological Discoveries," Camden M. Cobern, Ninth Edition, pp. 30, 31.* *SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.5*

While it is true that the language of the New Testament was the language of the common people, and that it employed words heard in the home, the shop, and the street, it is also true that many of these words were filled with a new content and lifted to a higher plane of meaning. It was the Christian element thus introduced that transformed the language, so that the words which Jesus spoke were spirit and life. (*John 6:63.*) Among the words which thus became Christianized are the Greek words translated faith, righteous, to justify, holy, to sanctify, love, hope, grace, the gospel, apostle, elder, bishop, deacon, to baptize, fellowship, flesh, soul, spirit, world, salvation, to redeem, and to reconcile. *SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.6*

It has been well said that "in the history of these and such like words lies the history of Christianity."-*Westcott*. When "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." there was a full revelation of saving grace that demanded expression in human speech and thus the common words of men became surcharged with a heavenly

significance, and the changes in the meaning of words testified to the reality of the change in the experience of men and women who surrendered their lives to the control of the living Word.*SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.7*

WHAT POTTERY REVEALS

Before I develop to any fuller extent the practical value of the inscriptions and of the papyri in relation to the New Testament revelation, I ought to give some attention to the writing that has been found upon pieces of broken pottery, technically designated as ostraca. In attempting this in a very limited space I think I cannot do better than to quote briefly from the statements of a recognized authority:*SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.8*

“To theologians the ostraca are of no small value. They add many new touches to our knowledge of the life of ancient times. They throw light on large tracts of the civilization upon which the Greek Old Testament, many of the books of the Apocrypha, the works of Philo and of the Egyptian Christians were based. They show us the men of the age of fulfillment in their workaday clothes, and they afford reliable evidence concerning the language spoken in the Hellenized Mediterranean world at the time when the apostolic mission became to ‘the Greeks’ a Greek. In these facts lies the great value of the ostraca (as of the nonliterary papyri) to the student of Greek Judaism and of the first centuries of Christianity.... Even more decidedly than the papyri, the ostraca are documents belonging to the lower orders of the people.... The ostrakon was beneath the dignity of the well-to-do. As a proof of the poverty of Cleanthes the Stoic it is related that he could not afford papyrus and therefore wrote on ostraca or on leather. In the same way we find the writers of Coptic potsherd letters even in Christian times apologizing now and then to their correspondents for having made use of an ostrakon in temporary lack of papyrus. We, however, have cause to “rejoice at the breach of etiquette. The ostraca” take us right to the heart of the class to which the primitive Christians were most nearly related, and in which the new faith struck root in the great world.”-“*Light front the Ancient East*” Adolph Deissmann.*SITI February 25, 1930, page 14.9*

I fully appreciate that this subject may seem lacking in interest to those who have never explored this field of Biblical knowledge, and that my necessarily brief presentation of so large a theme may contribute to this lack of interest, and yet it seemed advisable in dealing with the story of the Bible to make some reference to the modern discoveries that have borne such emphatic testimony to the authenticity and the historicity of the Holy Scriptures. In my next article I shall try to present some specific information concerning the bearing of these discoveries upon the intelligent interpretation of the New Testament writings. *SITI February 25, 1930, page 15.1*

March 4, 1930

New Light on New Testament Words

WWP

W. W. Prescott

How bits of pottery, papyri writings, and inscriptions recently discovered have thrown additional light on some of the key words of the Scriptures.

[Signs of the Times, March 4, 1930, The Story of Our Bible, Part 11, pp. 11, 12, 14]

In attempting to deal with the benefits that have accrued to New Testament criticism by the discovery of the inscriptions, the papyri, and the ostraca mentioned in my last article, I am confronted with a wealth of material and with a limited space in which to discuss it. Of course, I cannot cover the whole ground. I shall try, however, to make a few general statements bearing upon some phases of this most interesting question, and then to cite as many definite illustrations as my limitations will permit of passages from the New Testament upon which helpful light has been thrown. Those who desire to pursue the subject further can do so with the aid of any of the books from which citations are made.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.1*

Just in passing I will refer to the important part that Scripture quotations in the writings of the early church fathers have played in establishing the early date and the reliability of some of the most valuable New Testament manuscripts. An extended examination has been made of the patristic writings, comparing their quotations from the New Testament documents with the leading manuscripts, and thus determining the weight of evidence in favor of each of them. One feature of the result thus attained has been stated by a well-known English writer:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.2*

THE MORE ANCIENT THE BETTER

"It is by an indefinite repetition of the same process that the conclusion has been reached which lies at the foundation of textual criticism:-viz., that a certain group of ancient authorities, though in fewer numbers, is to be preferred to the later authorities, though in greater numbers. This is the principle for which Tregelles was contending all his life, against an influential and not incompetent opposition; and the cause for which he contended may now be considered won. The Archimedean point, so to speak, was supplied by patristic quotations. These came in to prove that the text represented by a certain small group of MSS.-not all themselves necessarily early in date-was really the text current in the best copies at the end of the second century, that it was really that which was nearest to the times of the apostles, that the other varieties of text were superinduced upon it, and not it superinduced upon them."-W. Sanday, in *The Expositor*, 1880, pp.167, 168.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.3*

Another Bible student bears the following testimony relating to this matter:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.4*

"The Sinaitic and the Vatican, and the allied cluster of manuscripts which they represent, are proved to contain the very oldest readings by comparing them with the numerous quotations from Scripture found in the writings of the church fathers of the second and third centuries."-"*The Divine Authority of the Bible*," G. Frederick Wright, p. 99.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.5*

The textual critics are agreed that the clause in *1 John 5:7* relating to the three that bear record in heaven has no foundation in the Greek MSS., and it has therefore been omitted in both the English and the American Revised Version. This decision is confirmed by the fact that this passage is not quoted by any of the early fathers when arguing on the subject of the Trinity. Thus do the fathers bear positive and negative testimony concerning the manuscripts.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.6*

Those who have given special study to the kinds of handwriting current among different peoples and at different periods have been able to determine the age of the writings of the earlier centuries of the Christian era. The study of the papyri has contributed important

help in this direction, as is indicated by the following quotation from Dr. Cobern:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.7*

“While few dated papyri come from the first century before Christ, great numbers come from the two centuries preceding and from the first, second and third centuries after Christ, so that for the first time undated documents can now be generally assigned with considerable certainty to their proper century. The formation of the letters and the character of the abbreviations and other changes in handwriting and orthography make it as easy to decide between a first century and a third century Greek manuscript as between a sixteenth century and a nineteenth century English manuscript. Thus paleography adds its weight to the former strong internal argument. The grammar and popular phraseology show equal changes, so that a new argument inexpressibly strong has suddenly arisen, compelling skeptical scholars almost irresistibly to date the New Testament documents in the first century.”—*“The New Archaeological Discoveries,” Camden M. Cobern, Ninth Edition, pp. 98, 99.**SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.8*

When the early disciples went forth to preach Christ as the divine Saviour, they were confronted by a paganism that had deified its head, the Roman emperor, and had appropriated and applied to him the very terms that rightfully belong to the Son of God. Christianity could not be treated by the Roman authorities as one of its recognized religions, since its supporters could not concede this deification of the emperor, but on the contrary affirmed that “to us there is one God, the Father, ...and one Lord, Jesus Christ.”¹ *Corinthians 8:6*. The apostle Paul declared, “We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord.”² *Corinthians 4:5*. The significance of such preaching is emphasized by the discovery of the papyri, as is indicated by this extract:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.9*

“The title ‘Lord’ as given to Jesus seems from the papyri to have a deeper meaning than was supposed. The emperors, when deified (first century and later), were addressed as ‘God,’ ‘Son of God,’ ‘Lord,’ ‘Saviour of the world,’ etc., and this gives new point to the use of these titles for Jesus. We now see that the term *Kurios Iasous* (‘Lord Jesus’) was an ascription of deity to Him, and as such

might have been accounted an act of antagonism to the emperor's claim. The exact phrase by which deity was ascribed to Jesus-‘Great God and Saviour’ (*Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1*)-appears literally in an inscription of 2 b. c., giving the emperor this title. In the Septuagint *ho Kurios* [the Lord] is constantly used as a title of God. This does not indeed prove the deity of Christ, but it adds dignity and strength to the modern argument. It shows that the church of the first century unequivocally accepted in full measure the deity of Jesus Christ....*SITI March 4, 1930, page 11.10*

THE WORD “LORD”

“St. Paul’s confession of our ‘Lord’ Jesus Christ, like the complemental thought that the worshipers were ‘slaves’ of the Lord, was understood in its full meaning by everybody in the Hellenistic East. This becomes still clearer if we compare, for instance, St. Paul’s expression, ‘the table of the Lord’ (*1 Corinthians 10:21*), with the analogous Egyptian expression concerning their chief deity, ‘the table of the Lord Serapis,’ recently discovered in a papyrus. So when a number of papyri and ostraca recently discovered speak of Nero as ‘the Lord,’ this is exactly synonymous with the inscription calling him ‘the God.’ This is the reason St. Paul insists that Jesus Christ is ‘our only Master and Lord’ (*1 Corinthians 8:5, 6*) [Cf. *Jude 4*]. No one can confess Jesus Christ as ‘Lord’ (*Kurios*), but by the Holy Ghost (*1 Corinthians 12:3*); yet every tongue shall ‘confess that Jesus Christ is Lord’ (*Philippians 2:9, 11*). This claim of deity wrapped up in the word explains why Polycarp went to martyrdom rather than to say ‘Lord Cæsar.’”-*Id.*, pages 127,128.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 12.1*

Thus do the recent discoveries, which give intimate glimpses of Roman life in the early days of Christianity, place in a vivid historical setting the documents that expounded the essential nature of the new and, to the pagans, antagonistic religion.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 12.2*

THE WORD “RANSOM”

According to the statement of our Lord Himself, His definite purpose

in coming to this world was “to give His life a ransom for many.” *Matthew 20:28*. This, then, is a fundamental feature of Christianity. But how would this teaching fit into the thought and the experience of those days? The papyri furnish the answer to this question as will appear in another quotation: *SITI March 4, 1930, page 12.3*

“When anybody heard the Greek word *lutron*, ‘ransom,’ in the first century, it was natural to him to think of the purchase money for manumitting slaves. Three documents from Oxyrhynchus relating to manumissions in the year 86, 100, and 91 or 107 a. d. make use of the word.... St. Paul in expanding and adapting to the Greek world the Master’s old saying about ransom, was admirably meeting the requirements and the intellectual capacity of the lower classes. For the poor saints of Corinth, among whom there were certainly some slaves, he could not have found a more popular illustration of the past and present work of the Lord. A Christian slave of Corinth going up the path to the Acrocorinthus about Eastertide, when St. Paul’s letter arrived, would see towards the northwest the snowy peak of Parnassus rising clearer and clearer before him, and every one knew that within the circuit of that commanding summit lay the shrines at which Apollo or Serapis or Asclepius the healer *bought slaves with a price, for freedom*. Then in the evening assembly was read the letter lately received from Ephesus [in which the Corinthian believers were told that they had been “bought with a price”], and the Straightway the new healer was present in spirit with His worshipers, giving them freedom from another slavery, *redeeming with a price* the bondmen of sin and the law-and that price no pious fiction, first received by him out of the hard-earned denarii of the slave, but paid by himself with the redemption money of his daily new self-sacrifice, (*Continued on page 14*) (*Continued from page 12*) rousing up for freedom those who languished in slavery.”-“*Light From the Ancient East*,” Adolph Deissmann, pages 331-333. *SITI March 4, 1930, page 12.4*

When our Lord sent forth His disciples after His resurrection, He instructed them to baptize believers “into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” *Matthew 28:19*. The correct interpretation of this formula is indicated by “the Inscription of Mylasa in Caria” belonging to the beginning of the Imperial period, in which is found in Greek the formula to be translated “into the

name of the god” used after the Greek word meaning purchaser. There is an interesting comment bearing upon this inscription:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.1*

BELONGING TO GOD

“In reference to the *ktematones*, which is to be found in Inscriptions only, Waddington observes that the word means *the purchaser of an article*, but the purchaser in question, in this connection, is only the nominal purchaser, who represents the real purchaser, *i.e.*, the Deity. The passage appears to the author to be the more important in that it presupposes exactly the same conception of the word *name* as we find in the solemn forms of expression used in religion. Just as, in the Inscription, *to buy into the name of God means to buy so that the article bought belongs to God*, so also the idea underlying, *e. g.*, the expressions *to baptize into the name of the Lord*, or *to believe into the name of the Son of God*, is that baptism or faith constitutes the belonging to God or to the Son of God.”—“*Bible Studies*,” Adolph Deissmann, page 147.*SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.2*

When at the beginning of His ministry Jesus read the Scripture to His friends and neighbors in the synagogue in His home town, Nazareth, He chose the passage found in *Isaiah 61:1*, in which occurs the statement, “He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives.” *Luke 4:18*. He then affirmed that He was fulfilling that prophecy. (*Verse 21*.) When He instituted the Lord’s Supper, He declared concerning the contents of the cup, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins” (*Matthew 26:28*), where the Greek word for “remission” is the same as is translated “release” in *Luke 4:18*. After His death and resurrection, He said to His disciples, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations” (*Luke 24:46, 47*), where the same Greek word is translated “remission.” After His ascension, when He had entered upon His priestly ministry, Peter declared to the council of religious leaders, “Him did God exalt at His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.” *Acts 5:31*, margin. Plainly the mission of Jesus was to secure

the remission of sins, the release from sins. The idea involved in the word thus translated “remission” or “release” was a familiar one in apostolic times, as appears from the Egyptian papyri. Then it was used to signify the release of the waters of the Nile upon the parched soil by opening the sluices, an act that meant a continuance of life to the people of Egypt. So Jesus by His work in our behalf opened the sluices and released the streams of the grace of God, which in turn brought release to the slaves of sin, and a continuance of life and blessing. It is interesting to note in this connection that the word translated “release” or “remission” (sometimes “forgiveness”) in the New Testament is the determining word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in the phrase “year of jubilee,” found in *Leviticus 25:13*. The release from sin is indeed a time of jubilee. *SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.3*

There has been much difference of opinion concerning the proper translation of the Greek word rendered “a propitiation” in *Romans 3:25*, since it is not the same word as is rendered “propitiation” in *1 John 2:2* and *4:10*. That the usual rendering, or “a propitiatory gift,” is warranted is shown by the discovery of inscriptions of early times, even before the days of Paul. The same word is found “on a votive gift which ‘people’ of Cos erected to the gods as a propitiatory gift for the welfare of the ‘son of God,’ Augustus. That is exactly the same use of the word as we find later in Dion Chrysostom, and the similarity of the respective formulæ is evident. The word is used in the same way in the Inscription of Cos No. 3474, which the author cannot date exactly, but which certainly falls within the imperial period.”—*Deissmann*. Our blessed Lord is the true propitiatory gift that the Father has set forth to faith. *SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.4*

THE AID OF THE SPADE

The cases I have cited will serve to illustrate how the spade of the archæologist has aided in determining the true text of the New Testament and the meaning of the language used in it. The subject is most interesting, and will richly repay further study. *SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.5*

I hope that what I have presented in this series of articles will serve to increase the confidence of all my readers in the Bible that we

have in our hands today as the message of God to our souls, divine in its origin, transmitted through the centuries under the supervision of divine Providence, and revealing to us a divine Saviour. In closing, I will pass on the following striking tribute to the Book, which will apply to any standard translation:*SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.6*

“The Bible has given to conscience a new vocabulary. It has set the spiritual life to music in immortal speech. It has been a seminal power of inspiration for our whole Western civilization. It has given the soldier doing battle for righteousness his trumpet and his sword. It has filled peace with moral and spiritual beauty and with a kind of military strength. It has given to quiet men and women a song which has sung in their hearts during hours of labor. It has given to every human relation a new beauty, and to every moral and spiritual aspiration a new authenticity. It has confronted the ages as an inspiration and a judge. It has given men the hopes for which they have lived and the standards by which they have judged. It stands royally in the midst of the pageant of the past. It has provided in its moral and spiritual quality the very cement which holds together the parts of history, and has given to life a meaning and a goal.”-*Extract from a document sent out by the American Bible Society. SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.7*

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

I would like to supplement this statement with one sentence: The Bible teaches us how we may be delivered from the guilt and power of sin through faith in the atoning cross, and how we may receive the gift of eternal life through our faith in the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ, our great High Priest. Now “unto Him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins, ...to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*SITI March 4, 1930, page 14.8*

